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Security Dialogue: Hybrid Threats and Modern Warfare

Ladies and Gentlemen!

**I have the great honor to present to you the report
"Russian Hybrid War against Ukraine: 2014-?"**

Here are some remarks on the concept of hybrid warfare.

This widely used concept after 2014, on the one hand, describes quite clearly the current situation in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, covering such phenomena as the complex and flexible use of political and economic, informational, including psychological operations and cyberattacks, as well as military tools to achieve political goals.

The positive content of this concept results in certain shortcomings. This is a rather vague and too broad concept. In fact, we have invented a word, that allows us to mask a fairly wide range of unfriendly subversive actions directed by the aggressor state against the victim state.

Hybrid warfare, what is now understood by this concept, has been an integral part of interstate conflicts since the beginning of human history. At least the Peloponnesian War, so vividly described by Thucydides, can certainly be seen as

an example of the active use of hybrid means of warfare, and on both sides - both Athenians and Spartans.

Thus, we can assume that the name of the hybrid war is a kind of figure of silence, an acceptable name for Russia's subversive actions. In fact, hybrid approaches are used not only by Russia, but the subject of our interest is precisely Russian approaches. It should be emphasized that the use of hybrid means is deeply rooted in Russian strategic culture and it has been used by Russians at least from the 15th - 16th centuries. It is also about the creation of proxy states, in particular, the Kasim Khanate, subversive activities, information activities, etc.

Speaking of hybrid warfare, we must emphasize that the means used in it are clearly coordinated and subordinated to the achievement of political goals.

Analysis of the main strategic documents of the Russian Federation, primarily the strategic course of the Russian Federation in relation to the CIS member states, approved by the Decree of the President of the Russian Federation Boris Yeltsin in 1995, the National Security Strategy of 2015, concepts of foreign policy of the Russian Federation in 2016, speeches of the President of the Russian Federation Putin, other leaders of the Russian Federation, allow to allocate 3 main purposes of the Russian hybrid war against Ukraine:

1. Prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and the EU.
2. To keep Ukraine in the buffer zone between Russia and the West.
3. Third, last but not least, the goal of Russia's policy toward Ukraine is to restore and strengthen Russian influence in Ukraine.

Russian-Ukrainian relations after 2014 can be characterized as a controlled confrontation, tensions in all domains - political, economic, informational and military.

It should be emphasized, that in 2014, Russia committed a direct and frank act of armed aggression against Ukraine by illegally occupying the territory of the Ukrainian Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. It happened in February - March 2014. Later, in March and April 2014, the Russians launched a proxy war in Donbass. The main purpose of these military actions can be the task of

destabilizing Ukraine and destroying its resilience and resistance to foreign influences. It should be emphasized, that the measures taken are long-term. I will try to briefly describe Russian activities in all four domains.

Let's start with the political one.

First of all, it is necessary to emphasize the coordinated Russian efforts to exert diplomatic pressure directly and indirectly, support information and other means of pro-Russian political groups in Ukraine; using as a weapon the certain individual organizations of the Orthodox Church; using the classical tools of special services, by forming and supporting various subversive groups such as "people's republics" in Bessarabia, Kharkov, Odessa and others. It should be emphasized that the peak of this activity fell on 2014-2016.

At the same time, we can see that Russian political activity in this area remains quite high, as evidenced by changes to the Russian constitution and elements of the propaganda campaign that accompanied these changes, which include provisions declaring Russia a successor state to the former USSR, creating a mechanism to protect compatriots and such interesting instrument of the legal institution, as federal territories, which can be used for further annexations. It is also important to mention the creation by the Russians of a tool that constitutionally makes it impossible to return the illegally occupied Crimea to Ukraine.

Economic domain.

The occupation of Crimea and the beginning of the war in the Donbass became a very strong blow to the Ukrainian economy. I want to emphasize that before the war, by 2013, up to 15% of Ukrainian industry was concentrated in the Donbass. Beginning in 2013, during the rule of the so-called pro-Russian President of Ukraine Viktor Yanukovich, trade restrictions against our state began. Russia has severely restricted and banned transit to the Caucasus and Central Asia from Ukraine. Various economic sanctions have been imposed. The amount of losses is characterized by the following data: in 2013, Ukraine's GDP was, according to the

World Bank, 143 billion 751 000 000 dollars. And in 2019, with the temporarily occupied by Russia Crimea and Donbas - 135 537 000 000 dollars.

Information domain.

Russians use every opportunity to carry out subversive propaganda against Ukraine, which is conducted on television, on the Internet, social networks, through the proliferation of fake news. This activity has been going on for more than a decade, but has intensified since 2014.

Cyberwarfare tools are actively used. Hacker groups backed by parts of the Federal Security Service and the General Staff of the Russian Armed Forces, such as military unit 26165 (according to independent investigative journalists such as Bellingcat team), are attacking critical infrastructure, in particular, energy supply, transport, public institutions among others. An example being the case of the launch of the destructive viruses Petya and NonPetya, the losses from which exceeded hundreds of millions of dollars.

Military Domain.

It should be noted that due to the tough stance of the European Union and the United States of America and the imposition of sanctions on Russia, Russia's policy has been significantly transformed, and the military tool has become less actively used. However, Russia continues the war of attrition, both economically and psychologically.

Russia is continuing large-scale military construction with two main objectives in line with their approaches: to secure state borders and to create an offensive military group that can be used against Ukraine, as well as in a hypothetical war with the NATO bloc. This group consists of units of the Southern and Western military districts.

In the occupied Crimea, which is used as a logistics base for Russian operations in Syria, MENA and the Balkans, a restricted area of A2/AD (Anti-Access/Area Denial) and strike capabilities (Missiles) based on Land and Sea Platforms, have been established.

The Russians are taking targeted measures that are hampering freedom of navigation in the Black and Azov Seas. The most dangerous was the Kerch strait incident – the attack on Ukrainian military boats on November 28, 2018.

The war in Donbas continues. The 1st and 2nd Army Corps are deployed there, which are integrated into the C2 (command & control) – 8 Field Army - the South Military District - General Staff of the RAF. 60-80 shelling are recorded weekly. According to the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, there have been 41-44,000 victims of the conflict over the six years of the war, more than 13,200 people have been killed, including more than 3,000 civilians.

Of course, negotiations are underway to resolve this conflict. Ukraine has consistently advocated the unconditional implementation of the Minsk Agreements of 2014-2015. At the same time, I would like to note that the situation has changed somewhat over the last 5 years, and the Agreements must be adapted to the current situation.

Meanwhile, Russia is implementing a large-scale program of integration of certain districts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions (CDDL) into the Russian Federation. In fact, we are approaching a turning point when Russia will choose one of two main scenarios. Either Abkhazian, when these illegal formations can be officially recognized, or like in Nagorno-Karabakh, where low-intensity hostilities have been going on for more than 30 years.

I will dwell separately on the issues of integration in the Russian Federation.

Last year, the Russians, based on several decrees of Russian president Vladimir Putin, distributed more than 200,000 Russian passports to Ukrainian citizens living in CDDL.

A plebiscite on changes to the Constitution of the Russian Federation, which took place on July 1, 2020 on the territory of CDDL, was indicative. There is a gradual but persistent implementation of the Russian legal system. Progressive steps have been taken to integrate these territorial entities into Russia. There, the Ukrainian national currency, the hryvnia, was withdrawn from circulation, the ruble was introduced, property rights were changed illegally, and a non-Ukrainian

taxation system was introduced. The Ukrainian language is gradually being squeezed out of all spheres of public life.

Thus, we can say that over the past 6 years, Russia has been carrying out large-scale subversive actions against Ukraine, thereby destroying the foundations of European security and creating a threat to peace and stability on the continent.

Thank you!

Please, ask your questions!